bridge, and that the members of the city of Westminster and the borough of Lambeth be requested, both as members of the commission, and as our representatives in Parliament, to oppose the appropriation of the property set apart for maintaining the present bridge, to the erection of a bridge on a distant site: that a committee be formed to consider the best means of opposing the threatened measure, and if expedient, in concert with other opposing parties, that a subscription be commenced to defray the necessary expenses, and that a committee be appointed, with power to add to their number."

NOTE IN BIRMINGHAM.

POLLUTION OF WELLS: PLANS FOR LUNATIC ASYLUM.

The sanatory condition of the town of Birmingham is at present engaging the serious attention of the authorities there. It has been found, that fæcal and putrid fluids are constantly sinking into the ground, from innumerable privies of an improper or imperfect order; and that these must have so poisoned the very sources of the town-supply of water, that "in all the wells in Birmingham more or less of ammonia is to be found in consequence." And it would be well if nothing worse than ammonia could so penetrate; but, even independently altogether of the intolerable idea of the thing, there cannot be a doubt that the wells must be impregnated with far more deletereous matter than mere ammonia. Be this as it may, however, the subject is not only at present engaging serious attention, as we have just observed; but, strange to say, "a French Count with his Engineers" have gone to Birmingham, for the purpose of offering their services towards the effectual removal of the causes of this serious evil. The fact is, this French count has taken out a patent, both in France and England, for the chemical reduction of manure into dry and scentless solids; so that Mr. Higgs has need to look to his laurels and his patents. This enterprising nobleman proposes, for a consideration of course, to divide every privy in Birmingham, at his own expense, into two distinct receptacles, one for ashes, &c., and the other for the more valuable chemical manure; which latter he will then be ready to convert, "by a chemical process, into a dry, portable manure," within the "very privies" themselves; thus fixing the deleterious gases and fluids at once into innoxious matter, removable forthwith, without the slightest injury to olfactory sensibility or to health; but, on the contrary, with the expeditious and effectual annihilation of a fertile source of serious injury to both; and that, too, without awaiting the formidable obstacles in the way of the construction and establishment of any general system of drains or sewers. The "covering, dividing, and puddling, of the privies," and the erection of the "chemical manure factory," will, of course, be very expensive; but the count, although he has not yet come to terms with the Birmingham commissioners, counts, of course, upon a remunerative profit to himself, as well as to the community at large. The city of Paris, he informs them, reaps an annual harvest, from such fertile sources, of no less than 500,000 francs, or 20,000*l.*, even without the operation of the save-all chemical scheme proposed. The annual expense of the working of this new scheme at Birmingham, exclusive of the heavy expense to be incurred by the count in the establishment of his "factory," and the improvements of his depôts or privies, he estimates at 20,000*l.*, and he expects to be sufficiently remunerated for the whole of this Herculean or Augean labour and expense, by a mere "premium for extraction, either by a fixed price per ton, or by a yearly sum, to be paid by the town to the company," under a "contract of considerable duration."——The erection of Lunatic asylums,—a subject at present engaging much interest and discussion in various towns and counties throughout the empire,—is, at Birmingham too, dividing the attention of the municipal authorities with the other sanatory measures just alluded to;—the *other* sanatory measures we say, since the restoration of the insane to a sanatory state is, of course, a subject deeply and most intimately connected,—as indeed, is the occurrence of insanity itself,—with the general question of the sanatory state of towns. The architect's plans for the proposed asylum at Birmingham have been presented to the council. They were prepared, say the committee, without an existing asylum as a model; but there is good reason to think, they add, "that, if approved by the council, the asylum would be recommended as a model for the kingdom." They "forbear, however, to append the architect's estimate to their report, until the tenders for the execution of the work have been supplied." A member of council, in expressing his surprise that the probable cost of the building had not been stated, remarked that the towns of Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield, had not decided upon erecting an asylum; and that the county of Hereford, and the city of Hereford, had agreed with three other counties to erect one jointly. The Birmingham plans have been approved by the Commissioners in Lunacy.

THE DECORATION OF RAILWAY STATIONS.

Felix Summerly has addressed a letter, through the columns of the *Athenæum*, with the purpose of shewing "how the patronage of art may come legitimately within the scope of railways." He says:—"Already, the great railway stations now in progress of building or in contemplation—at Euston-square, at Birmingham, at Liverpool, at Hungerford-bridge, at London-bridge, at Shoreditch, at Oxford, at Carlisle, and elsewhere—are destined to rank among the most marked architectural features of our times, provided the natural wants of the buildings are permitted to direct the expression and sentiment of their architecture. A railway station, it must be admitted, is as susceptible of architectural character as a church, a palace, a clubhouse, or any other building. The ability of the architect may make stations at once symmetrical and beautiful; and if he be a true inventive genius, he will not be discouraged by the seeming difficulties of dealing with the apparently awkward proportions of railway stations. But the architectural forms of stations are not my special theme. My purpose is to shew what a noble opportunity these great halls of meeting afford for promoting the decorative arts of painting and sculpture: an opportunity for reviving that natural union of decoration with architecture, which we find to have existed in the public buildings of all nations,—among the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and throughout the middle ages in our own country, until the advent of puritanism."

"Decorate the principal railway stations with paintings and statues,—coloured windows and mosaic pavements; and the multitudes awaiting the arrivals and departures of the trains, will thus be educated in art with the least possible parade of being so taught. An opportunity will be afforded to gratify and improve busy, hard-working thousands, especially of the manufacturing class, who have no means of access to private picture collections, and little leisure or opportunity to visit our one National Gallery."

"What a noble work it would be to have a series of frescoes, illustrative of communication and commerce, adorning the walls of the waiting rooms of Euston-square or Birmingham,—the windows resplendent with stained glass, and the floors decorated with mosaic pavements! But the cost?—some may ask, hesitatingly. At once let me say, that a railway should not be asked to decorate its stations with high art until it pays a dividend of 10 per cent.

The cost, in fact, would fall upon the public itself,—and be by them contributed welcomely for their own benefit; though the work would be instigated and promoted through the liberality of the shareholders, who would obtain all the credit justly due to the enterprise. Suppose 20,000*l.* were so applied,—spread over a period of three years, if necessary. This amount would be much less than 1d. in the pound on the gross receipts of the London and North-Western. It might, I think, be proved, if it were necessary to do so, that a station made highly attractive for its art would directly benefit the traffic. The passport to the picture hall would be the passenger's ticket. Railway shareholders are proverbially most liberal and generous, in spite of the idle imputations of Mr. Morrison or the taunts of "Cato;" and if Mr. Glyn thought it necessary to say to his brother shareholders at the next general meeting, "We propose to adorn our principal stations in the best manner of which British art and skill are capable—to give to our customers such architecture, paintings, sculpture, and decoration, as shall not be surpassed in England, and shall rival those of the stations in Germany"—I believe the meeting would welcome the proposal with cheers.

What corporation in the past history of the world can boast, like the London and North-Western, of an annual receipt of more than a million and a half of pounds sterling? Surely, the King of Bavaria, with his Glyptotheca—or Leo the Tenth, when he caused Raffaelle to decorate the Vatican—or the Doges of Venice—had no such resources at their command. And surely we have painters equal to the work—Mulready, Maclise, Eastlake, Edwin Landseer, besides Etty, Cope, Herbert, Dyce, and others. If railway companies would enter upon this noble course, we should soon have our public buildings rivalling those of modern Germany and ancient Italy. It would only be following the example of the church and of the ancient guilds."

ARCHÆOLOGICAL MEETINGS.

On Friday, the 8th inst., the *Archæological Institute* met at four o'clock in the afternoon, at their rooms in the Haymarket, and the *British Archæological Association* at half-past eight, in Sackville-street.

At the *Institute*, Mr. Stapleton was in the chair, and the subject fixed for discussion was "The works of the early goldsmiths." Mr. Hudson Turner, secretary, introduced it by some interesting remarks, shewing, among other points, the effect of the early goldsmithery on the artistical work of the period, on which a discussion followed. Mr. Newton read a description of some extensive Roman remains recently discovered at Gatterly Grange, near Catterick Bridge, Yorkshire.

At the *Association*, Mr. Pettigrew was in the chair, and the attendance numerous. Mr. Roach Smith read a communication from Matthew Bell, Esq., on the excavations recently made at Bourne Park, near Canterbury, where numerous discoveries, from time to time, have been made, of high interest, under the direction of the president of the association, Lord Albert Conyngham.

Mr. Wansey exhibited two querns, or hand-mill stones. They were found about twelve feet from the surface in excavating on one of the estates of the Fishmongers' Company in Ireland. An elaborate paper, by Mr. Jones, followed, on the Eumenides of Æschylus; a subject closely connected with the singular piece of sculpture discovered some months since in the City stone-yard, by Mr. Price, and which, notwithstanding the exertions of the association, is in danger of further mutilation or entire destruction. The fragment in question represents the three mythic personages often found represented on works of art of that period, particularly in Germany. The remainder of the evening was occupied with discussions relative to cromlechs, and other early sepulchral remains found in England; in which Messrs. White, Wright, Keete, Fairholt, and Godwin, joined.

A question of considerable importance was mooted, as to the asserted sale from the British Museum, of metal copies of medals and coins, so closely resembling the originals, as not to be discriminated by the best judges. This certainly ought not to be permitted.

The Dry Dock, Malta—commenced by driving the first pile May 10th, 1842, under the plans of Mr. Scamp, carried out by Mr. Walter Elliot, is fast approaching towards completion. The extreme length, from the gates to the centre of the bow, is 274 feet, and to the square 222 feet; the width 82 feet; and the depth from the level of the water 25 feet. It is constructed of limestone, principally from Gozo, being less porous than any other stone found in these islands. Until recently, there were about 2,000 persons at work in the quarries or elsewhere connected with the dock, having in their families about 5,000 souls. Now, however, there are only 300 employed. The first class masons receive 1s. 4d. a day; second class, 1s. 2d.; third class, 1s. 1d.; labourers, first class, 1s.; second class, 10d. The cost of the dock, it is estimated, will be about 90,000*l.*, independently of factories, &c., which are not yet estimated.

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